

REMARKS

Entry of this amendment, and reconsideration, are both respectfully requested in light of the amendments made to the claims and the remarks made herein. Claims 1-17 are pending herein, where claim 1, 8 and 15 are the independent claims.

Claims 1, 5-8 and 12-17 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent 6,505,057, to Finn in view of US Patent No. 6,839,670 to Stammler.

With respect to the rejection of independent claims 1, 8, and 15, the Examiner asserts that Finn discloses speech recognizing facilities, and echo canceling facilities to cancel one or more mutually unique cancelable speech entities, and combining the cancelled entities for overall non-recognition system wide (col. 16, line 1, through col. 18, line 6; Fig. 9A; col. 3, lines 17-23), that Finn does not disclose using echo compensation.

The Examiner further asserts that Stammler teaches echo compensation (col. 19, lines 23-67; col. 7, lines 34-9), that both Finn and Stammler are analogous art because they concern voice processing, and it would have been obvious to modify Finn with Stammler's speech recognition system for convenient hand-free device control using speech (Stammler, col. 2, lines 19-24), and capable of canceling echos at each microphone input, as taught by Finn.

Applicants respectfully disagree for at least the following reasons.

Applicants' claim 1, as amended, sets forth a method for operating a user-interactive, multi-device, audio-video system that contains user speech recognizing facilities and echo canceling facilities for avoiding the recognizing of speech output from the system as user speech, wherein in the presence of a plurality of devices, each including a functionally separate speech recognizing facility, and echo canceling facility, the method includes a step of driving each echo canceling facility to combine each facility's functional ability for canceling one or more mutually unique cancelable speech entities, and combining such cancelled entities for overall non-recognition by the system.

Applicants' claim 8, as amended, sets forth A multi-device, audio-video system that contains speech recognizing facilities and echo canceling facilities for avoiding the recognizing of speech output from the system as user speech, wherein in the presence of a

plurality of devices, each separate device including a functionally separate speech recognizing facility, wherein each echo canceling facility is arranged to combine its echo canceling ability using joint canceling means for canceling one or more mutually unique cancelable speech entities, and combining means for combining such cancelled entities for overall non-recognition by the system.

Applicants' claim 15, as amended, sets forth a speech enhanced device for use in a multi-device audio-video system having speech recognizing facilities and echo canceling facilities for avoiding the recognizing of speech output from the device as user speech. The device comprises speech input/output means interposed between said speech recognizing and echo canceling facilities, for intercoupling another speech-enhanced device.

Finn discloses an integrated vehicle voice enhancement system and hands-free cellphone system that implements a voice-activated microphone steering technique to generate intelligent voice signals for both the voice enhancement and hands-free cellphone aspects, applying both single and multiple channel systems. The microphone steering switch inputs echo-cancelled voice signals from in-vehicle microphones, and outputs a raw telephone input signal. Each microphone must carry the ability to switch on and off, based on the sound volume, and only one microphone is designated as the primary microphone. Finn's noise reduction feature filters background vehicle noise in the system microphone signals, to generate a noise-reduced signal.

Finn, however, does not teach or suggest a method for operating a user-interactive, multi-device, audio-video system that contains user speech recognizing facilities and echo canceling facilities so that the system can avoid recognizing speech output from the system as user speech. Finn does not refer to a plurality of separate devices, each including a functionally separate speech recognizing facility, and echo canceling facility, but merely a bunch of microphones. Nor does Finn suggest utilizing the synergy from combining a plurality of devices, each with its own cancellation facility, and driving each echo canceling facility with each separate device to combine each facility's functional ability to cancel one or more mutually unique cancelable speech entities, and combining such cancelled entities for overall non-recognition by the system.

Finn just does not teach or suggest the limitations of applicants' claimed inventions of claims 1, 8 and 15.

Stammler discloses a process for automatically controlling one or more devices by speech command. Stammler includes a compound word speech recognizer, and a speaker-dependent speech recognizer, for classifying user commands by recognition probability. After recognition, the commands are checked for plausibility, and the admissible, plausible speech command with the highest recognition probability is identified as the entered speech command. Stammler does not teach or suggest a system built up of devices which each including a functionally separate speech recognition facility, and echo-canceling facility, nor driving each echo-canceling facility to maximize the system echo-canceling functionality.

There is nothing taught or suggested in either Finn or Stammler that would suggest to one of skill in the art the use of echo cancellation means, or how one would implement the echo cancellation to meet the described use. Accordingly, one would not look to Finn or Stammler for echo-canceling using a combination of each echo canceling facility of the individual devices comprising the system, to essentially to combine their forces for canceling one or more mutually unique cancelable speech entities and combining such cancelled entities for overall non-recognition by the system, as set forth by each of independent claims 1, 8 and 15. Hence, combining Finn and Stammler would not realize inventions such as those claimed in claims 1, 8 and 15.

Moreover, nothing in Finn or Stammler supports their combination under the law. That is, with regard to obviousness, the courts have continually held that there must be some suggestion in the teachings of the prior art as "[t]he very ease with which the invention can be understood may prompt one to fall victim to the ... effect of a hindsight syndrome wherein that which only the invention taught is used against its teacher." Iron Grip Barbell Company v. USA Sports, Inc., 04-1149 (Fed. Cir. 2004), (quoting In re Kotzab, 217 F.3d 1365, 1369 (Fed. Cir. 2000)). "Where an invention is contended to be obvious ... our cases require that there be a suggestion, motivation or teaching ... for such a combination." *Id.* (quoting In re Fine, 837, F.2d 1071, 1074 (Fed. Cir. 1988)). "This requirement prevents the use of 'the inventor's disclosure as a blueprint for piecing together the prior art to defeat patentability -- the essence of hindsight.'" *Id.* (quoting

Ecolochem, Inc. v. So. Cal. Edison Co., 227 F.3d 1361, 1371-1372 (Fed. Cir. 2000), quoting In re Dembiczak, 175 F. 3d 994, 999 (Fed. Cir. 1999).

In this case, applicants believe that the examiner has impermissibly used the teachings of the instant application as a blueprint to combine the teachings of Finn and Stammmler without any suggestion or teaching for such combination by either reference. The examiner fails to show what suggestion or teachings the references provide for combining their teachings as suggested. Rather the examiner has provided a rationale for the combination of the cited references realize a convenient, hands-free control using speech. Hence, rather than finding a motivation or suggestion to develop the novel features of the present invention in the combination of Finn and Stammmler, the examiner has inferred such motivation or suggestion after reading the description of the present invention.

Applicants submit, therefore, with respect to independent claims 1, 8 and 15, the reasons for the examiner's rejection are overcome, and the rejections under 35 USC 103(a) can no longer be sustained. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 1, 8 and 15 over the art or record.

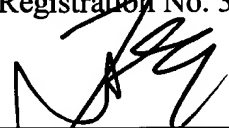
With regard to claims 6, 7, 12-14, 16 and 17, these claims ultimately depend from claims 1, 8 and 15, which have been shown to be allowable. Accordingly, claims 6, 7 and 12-14, 16 and 17 are also allowable by virtue of their dependency upon an allowable base claim.

And while claims 2-4 and 9-11 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) by Finn in view of Stammmler, and further in view of US Patent No. 5,761,638, to Knittle, applicants have opted not to argue against the Finn/Stammmler/Knittle combination, because independent claims 1 and 8 are patentable in view of the Finn/Stammmler combination for at least the reasons set forth, applicants believe that the inventions called out by dependent claims 2-4 and 9-11 cannot be obvious in view of the Finn/Stammmler/Knittle combination under 103(a), and respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2-4 and 9-11 thereunder.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claims.

For all the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all the present claims are patentable in view of the cited references. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

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